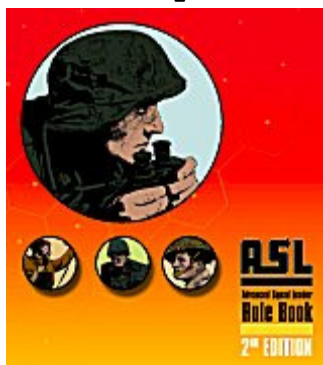


CROSSFIRE

Volume 1 Number 3

2002

AGS Report from HQ - Bruce Probst



AGS Meeting Report -- 4 Oct 02

Only a few of us turned up for this month's meeting, which is something of a disappointment -- what are the rest of you up to? What could be better than an evening playing ASL?

The scenario of choice for the evening was SP10 "Bring Up The Boys", a 1940 British keeping their upper-lips stiff vs. rampaging Germans scenario. Joe Moro faced off as the British against Jonathan Woodger's Germans, while I played the fascist hordes against Brent Sword's poms. The latter was intended merely as a teaching game as this was Brent's first attempt at actually

playing ASL, although it actually developed into quite a tense game.

Meanwhile Andrew continued playtesting his Pacific island monster, taking the Japanese against Geoff Morris's US in a scenario entitled "Sweeping the Ridge".

ROAR has "Bring Up The Boys" as a frequently-played and seemingly well-balanced scenario, and tonight's results did nothing to dispute that. Joe's British prevailed over Jonathan's fascists, apparently largely due to the latter's tendency to malfunction the weapons on all of his numerous tanks. My Germans defeated Brent only by a narrow margin -- he has clearly learnt the first skill of ASL, namely "roll low" with an average British DR of "4" in the first couple of turns. Alas, this handy technique failed him in later turns allowing the Germans to regroup and storm into the Board 10 village for eventual victory.

Meanwhile somewhere in the Pacific, Andrew's cries of "do Japanese cower?" and "My leader has gone beserk!" gave a hint as to what was happening, Geoff demonstrating that he can indeed do a nice bit of ridge-sweeping when required.

Hopefully next month will be a little livelier!

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AGS Signals Officer's Report - Chris Harding



Welcome to the third edition of Crossfire for 2002, this one is a long way behind schedule, in case anyone noticed. However in the 'off season' I have received some feedback on our last few issues. Not only was it positive, it came from overseas, in fact from the editor of the Maple Leaf Route. Further to this exchange of e-mails with Jim McLeod I received a copy of their latest newsletter, we have a way to go to reach their standards, but it was interesting to see how another group of people go about producing a fan 'zine. Our Canadian friends focus heavily on the local scene and cover their tournaments and gathers in a good deal of depth. We could do the same, but we would need a few more people to turn up to our monthly meetings. What makes me most pleased this issue is that we have finally been able to include a scenario. Joe Moro wrote an article for the Special Edition last year and from that a scenario has grown. I've helped play test it with Joe, and I certainly think it is worth having a look at.

From an editorial position, I consider the fact we have been able to include a scenario, a major step forward in evolving Crossfire towards where we would like it to be. I only hope that further issues of Crossfire can also have a scenario (or two) in them.

Finally, this is my last edition of Crossfire as the editor, I'm moving back to South Australia, early in 2003 and will be handing over to Joe, who has done a good deal of the hard work behind the scenes to make Crossfire what it is today. I would like to thank Neil Andrews and Bruce Probst for their help and I wish all of AGS all the best in the future.

Bookshop Review - By Neil Andrews

ASL is a game that is based on and has its roots in the history of the centre part of the 20th century. It is a military simulation, a wargame if you like, that has covered conflicts starting with the Spanish Civil War through the Second World War and so far culminating with the Korean War and the Franco Indo-China War. But the system is based deeply in the greatest conflict of all time namely World War II.

Now I, like you have a strong grounding in the history that come out of that conflict. I have a whole raft of resources to help me understand the course of events of the war. And you would have to admit that an understanding of particularly the technology of the war is important if you wish to succeed in the play of the game. How exactly should you as a player best use the vehicle or gun that you have been given in the OB. The way they were used historically is often a good place to start.

Film and television has become a major source of military history information. More and more history stuff is now gracing the box. But the problem is that it is often far too strategic in nature for it to be of much use in our tactical world of ASL. Apart from fictional things like say "Band of Brothers", most of the WWII stuff on the box is at it's very best at regimental scale. But most often an individual division would be damned lucky to even get a mention. That sort of makes it difficult for us to use as a resource when we are dealing with platoons and companies. What they do offer to us is some generalities on the use of some of the technologies. T 34's were buggers for the Germans to kill early on, Tigers and Panthers terrorised the Western Allies and the like.

But if we want some real details we have to go and hit the books. And I don't know about the rest of you, but I have heaps of them. All topics, all scales and all theatres that give me the information that I use to help me be a bit of a better player than I other wise would be without them. But this brings another issue to mind and the core of this article. Where exactly do you go to in the world's most livable city to get "THE SOURCE OF ALL KNOWLEDGE".

1) General Bookshops :-

There are a huge number of bookshops in Melbourne. Most of them belong to a few specific chains like Dymocks, Angus and Robertson and Collins. Most of these stores are in the large shopping malls you can find around the city or in the central CBD. Now the problem with these stores is that they have only a small range of military history books that would be of interest to us. These books are often the same in all of the different stores, regardless of which chain they belong to. So this means that a small range of books available at these stores is actually a little bit smaller overall. And finally the books at these stores tend to be very general in topics, and strategic in nature. But on the other hand they have the advantages in that with their extensive resources the books they do have available, particular the ones available from the larger publishers are some of the newest available. And with their buying power, they can often have the effect of reducing the price of the books by a few bucks. And you can never complain about this.

Pros:

- a) Wide variety of locations, easiest to access around Melbourne.
- b) New books quickly available.
- c) Books often slightly cheaper in price.

Cons

- a) Small selection of relevant books in range.
- b) Range often repeated in stores, regardless of the chains.
- c) Books often cover the strategic course of the war(s).

2) 2nd hand Bookshops :-

Well these shops can be found all over the place, in every suburb or area. And they can be found in almost any condition. Some places are dens of inequity, in which sun-light has never seen inside the building, and that the persons who run them look like they should be running alright, running from the law. Others are the opposite, well organised, well lit, well run. The problem lies in actually finding the good ones. And they are in my opinion a source of some great books. And the bonus is that these books are often no longer available in other places, particularly finding out of print goodies. Now the availability of useful books could at best be called irregular. You just never have the foggiest idea what you are likely to find on the shelves. It can go from a feast to a famine. And this can happen on almost a weekly basis in some stores. The other advantage of these shops is of course the price. You (if you are there at the right time and downright lucky) can find a bargain. The book you can walk out of the store with can sometimes be in the "this is very cheap" range. But the problem is that you may never find the book you want in particular. But if you are not after a particular book, and you are just there for the browse. You may well find the right book at the right price.

Pros:

- a) Wide variety of locations.
- b) You just never know what you will find inside.
- c) PRICE, PRICE, PRICE.

Cons

- a) Difficult to find a specific book.
- b) You just never know what you will find inside.
- c) Books are often in a somewhat indifferent condition.

3) Napoleons Military Bookshop

Well the name says it all, but I have also called it the "Wandering bookshop". Ever since I first became aware of its existence in the early 1980's, I think that it has been in 3 or 4 different locations. Some were small and some were large, but they were and are all in the CBD of the city. And as such were always accessible locations for everyone to get to. And the best thing is of course. THEY ONLY SELL MILITARY HISTORY STUFF. Ok, so it is not always books, but you can even get some ASL stuff, other wargame supplies, videos and all sorts of other great stuff. In my opinion if they had a bit more space in the store, and they sold model kits this place would be heaven on earth. The range could be considered a bit on the small side. But it is just military history books, nothing else. And this makes

up in a big way any deficiencies. The only other major issue is that due to it's much smaller buying power, the prices tend to be a bit on the steep side. But the store (along with Hyland's) is the best source of military history books in Melbourne. Oh! And remember that make sure you take your group ID card along when you go to buy some stuff. 10% off the price is nothing to sneeze at.

Pros

- a) A dedicated military history bookshop.
- b) One of the best and widest range of military history information available.
- c) 10% discount to AGS members.
- d) One of the few places that you will be likely to find books describing tactical scale combat.

Cons

- a) On average prices tend to be high.
- b) Only one store in Victoria.

4) **Hyland's Military Bookshop**

Well almost all of the comments that apply to Napoleon's apply to Hylands. A Pure military bookshop, with an even wider range than Napoleon's due to them just having a bit more room in their underground showroom. For the same reasons mentioned above the prices are a little steep, they just can't buy the books in enough bulk to drive the prices down. But this place has the best range of books that I know of in Melbourne. To combat the high prices the store has recently established a 2nd hand book section at the back of the store. The prices even in this section are not exactly dirt cheap, but you never know you just might find something you are looking for at a better price than they otherwise might have been. Again the 10% discount for AGS members applies so make sure your ID is in your wallet. It is my opinion that this is the best military bookshop in Melbourne.

Pros

- a) A dedicated military bookshop.
- b) One of the best and largest range of military history information available.
- c) 10% discount to AGS members applies.
- d) Books of both tactical and strategic scale (again).

Cons

- a) On average prices tend to be high (again).
- b) Only one store in Victoria.

5) **Military Melbourne**

I had only found out about this store quite recently. But if the shelves are anything to go by, it's been there quite a while. Located just off Chapel St in Prahran, it holds a reasonably extensive selection of books covering all topics, almost all of them hard cover. But therein lies the problem. In the little room that makes up this store there is almost no room for all the books. And the books that are there are stored in almost anyway they can fit. This means piles of books on floors and in boxes here and there. It was almost as untidy as my room. Now the proprietor seems to know where everything is located, but this does not help the customer too much. Most of the books are 2nd hand, and they are vastly overpriced for what they are. But there seem to be a real selection of books, particularly unit histories that would be difficult, if not impossible to obtain elsewhere. The other positive lies with the fact that the store offers a dedicated mail order service. The owner publishes a regular and comprehensive listing of his stock, and considering his organisational skills, this is a good thing. This is not the best source around. But if you have exhausted other options they might just have what you are looking for

Pros

- a) Mail Order Service
- b) Hard to obtain books and documents

Cons

- a) Books tend to be expensive, especially considering most are 2nd hand
- b) Badly organised for the customer that is dropping in to buy off the street
- c) Only one location

6) **The Military Bookroom**

Well I have to be honest here in that I have never actually been into this shop as yet. But I have met and bought things from the husband and wife team that runs this store at Cancon, which they are regulars. Similar to Military Melbourne, most of their books are 2nd hand in very good condition, and again they are reasonably expensive. I can't comment on how easy it is to find stuff in the store. But considering the organisation involved in moving a whole bunch of stuff to Canberra, I would suspect that it is pretty good. They again provide a mail order service through their store.

Pros

- a) Mail Order Service.
- b) Hard to obtain books and documents.

Cons

- a) Books tend to be expensive, especially considering most are 2nd hand
- b) Only one location

7) **The Others**

Well is there any others left? Well the answer to that is probably simply there are other places in the world apart from Melbourne. And thanks to the postal system and the Internet, you can get virtually (pun intended) get anything you like from almost anywhere you like. But for me I much prefer to buy books with the book in my hand, and a human being taking my hard earned cash. But if you can't find something in the stores around Melbourne you really want, then everything from interstate bookstores to Amazon.com are available to you. They will take your money whether your are around the corner or around the world.

Pros

- a) You should be able to find what you want somewhere
- b) Mail order service (wouldn't be much point if there wasn't one would there!)

Cons

- a) It's a long way to the US to visit Amazon.com (not that you can)
- b) Have to rely on the sometimes long international mail systems
- c) Depending on exchange rates it can be an expensive project

Well there you go. If you want some mil history references on almost any topic of interest. I am sure you would be able to find something that takes your fancy and a price that can sit well with your budget and your bank manager. (Assistant Ed's note: Hey guys if you can't find a copy of the long out-of-print book you have been searching for ages, drop me a line at indiabooks@books.aus.net. As a book trader, I have numerous contacts in the book trade, both here and internationally and I am always willing to help a fellow ASLer finding that little gem of a book)

Traders Corner

This area is for AGS members who wish to advertise any wargaming items or military books they wish to sell/purchase/trade. If you wish to place an ad send it to the editor of Crossfire topkat@jeack.com.au

Wanted to Buy:

SPQR by GMT, Deluxe Alexander by GMT. Contact Chris at topkat@jeack.com.au with the condition and asking price

For Sale

Military books covering various periods. Most in GC, few in mint. If interested e-mail me for a listing and prices at mlcolbert@netc.net.au

Currently Posted to Army Group South

Name & Member No


Bruce Probst	01	S. Banham	02	N. Andrews	03	C. Harding	04	A. Rogers	06
David Bardi	07	M. Colbert	08	P.Sommerville	09	Steve Oxley	10	J. Westlake	11
Joe Moro	12	Geoff Morris	13	Steve Lessing	14	Keith Gillie	15	Chris Betts	16
Chris Carson	18	Kirk Meyer	19	A. Millar	20	Tim Reade	21	John Sawyer	22
G.Stokes	23	Ron Trainer	24	D.Webster	25				

Could all those members who have not yet paid Neil Andrews please send their money as soon as possible so that we can keep the Club financial.

Club Meetings

Army Group South – meets monthly at the Ashburton Library 154 High Street Ashburton, Melbourne Victoria, from 1800 hours onwards. The Secretary usually sends out an e-mail the week prior notifying members of what the game (s) of the night will be, however, people who turn up are most welcome and every effort will be made to try and get these people involved in a game. So if you are interested in ASL and you are in the area, come along and meet the gang. Hope to see you there.

Grigioverde #1	<h1 style="margin: 0;">ALARIC'S RETURN</h1>
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Monterosi, 9th Sept. 1943. Upon learning of Italy's surrender, Hitler immediately implemented Operation Alaric: the disarming of Italian troops and the occupation of Italy. The 3rd PanzerGranadier Division, located north of Rome, was ordered to quickly occupy Rome and neutralise any Italian resistance. A Kampfgruppe was quickly despatched south along the old Cassius road to Rome. At Monterosi, the Germans come upon a platoon of sappers under Sottotenente Rossi of the Ariete Division, hastily mining a roadblock a few hundreds meters ahead of an Italian fortified position. The Germans gave Rossi 15 minutes to dismantle the roadblock. After ordering his men back to the safety of the main Italian positions (except for four volunteers who remained behind with him), Rossi set explosives charges. As the Germans moved forward under the cover of tank and machine gun fire, Rossi lit the fuses attached to mines and explosives set inside two trucks blocking the road. The explosion killed Rossi and the four volunteers, destroying vehicles and killing a number of German troops and stunning the rest of the column. After this unexpected Italian action, unlike the behaviour of most Italian troops they had encountered until that point, the panzergranadiers retreated to reorganize. When two hours later the panzergranadiers recommenced their advance, the Italian main position at Monterosi was ready to receive them.

Victory Conditions: The Germans must exit >24 CVP of the south edge of board 41

ITALIANS Sets Up First	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Ger. only	^ N	Boards 16 Rows A to P only 41 Rows A to P only
GERMANS Moves First									

ELEMENTS OF 135TH DIVISIONE CORAZZATA "ARIETE II": Set up anywhere on board 41 **ELR: 3 SAN: 3**

III Gruppo, 135th Reggimento Artiglieria

**ART
149/19
(SSR 3)**

2-2-7

2

16th Reg. Cavaleggeri di Luca

4-4-7	3-4-7	9-1	8-0	7-0	mmg	lmg	1 squad foxholes
3	9					4	

10th Reg Cav. Vittorio Emanuele II

SMV M42 75/32	M 15/42	AB 41
2		

ELEMENTS OF A KAMPFGRUPPE KRASER, PzGr DIV. 3: Enter turn 1 north edge board 16 **ELR: 4 SAN: 2**

4-6-7	9-1	8-1	8-0	dm mmg	dm ltg mtr	psk	lmg	StuG III G	PSW 222 (L)	SPW 251/10	SPW 251/ 1
9							3				
								3			3

<p>SSR:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EC are dry, with no wind as start 2. The valley on board 41 does not exist. Treat as level 0 elevation, all other terrain exits normally. 3. Place overlays Hi5 on 41 H4-H5 and Hi4 on 41 E2-E3. 3. Use ART 149/13 counters to represent 49/19 	<p>Aftermath: All day the Italian repulsed repeated German attacks. By the end of the day the Italian losses amounted to around 20 men killed and approx. 50 wounded plus four tanks destroyed. The Germans suffered a similar number of casualties together with a number of AFV's destroyed. It was only when the Ariete was ordered to fall back, were the Granadiers able to resume their advance towards Rome. For their supreme sacrifice, Rossi and his four companions were awarded Italy's highest decoration for valour, the Medaglia d'Oro al Valor Militare, only some of the 12 Medaglie d'Oro al Valor Military awarded to soldiers and civilians defending the Italian capital between 9-11 Sep 1943.</p> <p><i>Designed by Joe Moro</i> <i>Playtesting by CSIR</i></p>
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